

Message Text

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CINCPAC HONOLULU

UNCLAS BANGKOK 0845

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, TH, LA

SUBJ: JOINT THAI-LAO COMMITTEE MEETING IN BANGKOK

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: BANGKOK 698

1. LAO INTERIOR MINISTER PHENG PHONGSAVAN ARRIVED IN BANGKOK JANUARY 14 TO TAKE PART IN THE JOINT THAI/LAO (BORDER) COMMITTEE MEETING. ACCORDING TO LOCAL NEWS-PAPER REPORTS, PHENG TOLD NEWSMEN AT THE AIRPORT THAT LAOS NEEDS MORE RTG ASSISTANCE IN THE TRANSIT OF GOODS TO LAOS AND THAT HE ALSO INTENDS TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE RTG FOR THE PURCHASE OF RICE AND OTHER NECESSITIES.

IN ANSWER TO NEWSMEN'S QUESTIONS, PHENG REPORTEDLY SAID THAT THERE ARE NO MORE NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS IN LAOS EXCEPT THOSE HELPING IN PROJECTS SUCH AS ROAD BUILDING.

2. "THE NATION" OF JANUARY 16 QUOTES COMMUNICATIONS UNDER-SECRETARY SIRILAK CHANTHARANGSU AS SAYING THAT IN UNCLASSIFIED UNCLASSIFIED

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ADDITION TO OFFERING TO REDUCE THE EXPRESS TRANSPORT ORGANIZATION FREIGHT RATE BY 20 PERCENT, THE RTG HAS ALSO

OFFERED TO GIVE THE LAO DELEGATION THE CHOICE OF A PRIVATE COMPANY TO CARRY GOODS OR THE FORMATION OF A JOINT VENTURE COMPANY BETWEEN THE PRIVATE SECTORS OF BOTH COUNTRIES WHICH WOULD BE INCORPORATED IN THAILAND TO EXCLUSIVELY CARRY TRANSPORT GOODS TO LAOS. THE SAME NEWSPAPER QUOTES THAI FOREIGN MINISTER CHARUNPHAN ITSARANGKUN NA AYUITHAYA AS SAYING THAT THE RTG WILL RESPOND FAVORABLY TO ANY REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE FROM LAOS.

3. ACCORDING TO THE "BANGKOK POST" OF JANUARY 16, THE JOINT COMMITTEE HAS AGREED THAT LAO BORDER SECURITY UNITS ALONG THE THAI BORDER WILL ACCELERATE EFFORTS TO REDUCE THE SMUGGLING OF RICE AND STOLEN CARS FROM THAILAND, WHILE THE RTG WILL INCREASE CHECKS TO HALT THE FLOW OF ILLEGAL WEAPONS FROM LAOS. OTHER AGREEMENTS REPORTEDLY INCLUDE:

A) THE RTG WILL ASSIST LAOS WITH TRANSPORTATION EQUIPMENT TO IMPROVE SECURITY MEASURES IN THE BORDER AREA; B) THAI PATROL BOATS ON THE MEKONG RIVER WILL DECREASE THEIR SPEED FOR THE SAFETY OF SMALLER PASSENGER BOATS; AND, C) THE RTG WILL GIVE PRIVILEGES TO LAO OFFICIALS TRAVELLING TO THAILAND OR TRANSITTING TO OTHER COUNTRIES.

4. THE SUB-COMMITTEES WILL SUBMIT THE RESULTS OF THEIR MEETINGS TO THE MINISTERIAL-LEVEL MEETING, WHICH BEGAN JANUARY 16, FOR FURTHER STUDY. A KEY FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL TOLD US THAT THE TWO DELEGATIONS WILL MOVE TO PATTAYA BEACH JANUARY 17 TO CONCLUDE THEIR TALKS IN A MORE RELAXED ATMOSPHERE. WE WILL TRANSMIT A READING OF THE OUTCOME OF THE VISIT BY JANUARY 21.
KINTNER

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